

# Welcome Back!

Greetings and Happy Fall from your friends at Summerglen Music! We hope you've had a lovely summer and that school is treating you well. In this issue, we'll show you how to make practice fun with improvisation, help you prepare for All-County auditions, and give you the rundown on cool local concerts and the latest Summerglen news. We wish you a fun and music-filled October!



## Win All-County Auditions with Planning - Using a Practice Planner to Prepare Your Audition Piece

Want to ace your All-County audition? One way to play a successful audition is to know your audition piece thoroughly. Knowing your piece well helps you feel more confident and relaxed when you audition. Here, you'll learn how to create a practice planner to help you organize your practice and master all the details of your audition piece--details your competitors may miss!

### What is a practice planner?

A practice planner is a simple chart that lists each section of your piece along with tasks to help you learn each section thoroughly. Many people make the mistake of trying to learn the entire piece at once, and end up feeling overwhelmed. A practice planner keeps you out of this habit by breaking the piece into easy-to-manage sections. Each section is small enough that you can make progress on it during a single practice session, and the tasks on the planner show you exactly what you need to do to make every section better.

### How To Make A Practice Planner

To begin making your practice planner, look over your audition piece to get a sense of how it goes. Then, start breaking the piece into smaller chunks. Time or key signature changes are great places to begin or end sections, so be sure to look for these big transitions in your piece. Now, divide the big transitions into smaller sections, using what's in each section to determine how long or short it will be. Two measures of sixteenth note runs can be a section, because it may take a while to work up. On the other hand, sixteen measures of whole notes can be a section as well. It's up to you how long or short each section is--just make sure your sections are manageable for you.

As you divide up your piece, write the measure numbers for each section vertically down the left side of a piece of paper. Across the top of the page, write your tasks--the different things you need to do in order to work up your piece. Some sample tasks are:

**Sightreading** - Play straight through the section and enjoy sounding bad.

**Basics** - Learn notes and rhythms, and add basic dynamics and articulations.

**Fine-Tuning** - Polish dynamics and articulations, fix tempos, and make it stylish!

**Memorizing** - Even if you aren't required to memorize your piece, memorizing it can ensure that you know it well.

**Dress Rehearsals** - Play through the entire piece in front of other people.

**Ready** - Celebrate your accomplishments!



### How To Use Your Practice Planner

Now that you've created your planner, use it regularly to help you work on each section of your piece until it's all prepared. Start by picking one section and working on a specific task. When you master the task, check off its box. For example, once you've learned to play the notes and rhythms correctly in measures 1-8, check off the Basics box for those measures. Make sure you go in order--memorizing the piece won't work if you haven't mastered the notes and rhythms!

Each day, review your planner and set goals for your practice. Is there a task that is almost ready to be checked off? If so, make that the main goal of your practice session, pinpointing and fixing the problems so you can earn your check. Setting small goals like, "I will check off the Basics box for measures 20-28," can help focus your practice and lead to big improvements over time.

Once you check off a task for two neighboring sections, try playing both sections together. Work on playing the two sections together until it feels easy and sounds good, and then add more sections. After you play a section or group of sections, reflect on how you played. If problems crop up that weren't there before, isolate and work on them until you're able to play your entire piece beautifully.

When you arrive at the "Dress Rehearsals" box, make the effort to get out and play your piece for an audience! The more you play in front of other people, the less intimidating it will be to perform before a judge. Playing for family and friends also helps you uncover trouble spots--places you don't know as well as you thought you did, or areas where you tend to feel nervous. If you take the time to find your trouble spots, you can work them out before audition day!

Creating a practice planner takes a few extra minutes up front, but it gives you a way to see exactly how much progress you're making with each part of your audition piece. Try it, because when you make your practice more organized, you make auditioning easier!

# **IMPROVISATION CORNER** - "I WANT TO PLAY A COOL SOLO, BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW TO START!"

Improvising, or creating your own music on the spot, is something that many musicians want to do well. However, improvisation is a unique skill, and sometimes it's hard to know how to practice it. In this column, we'll show you some ways to practice improvisation. Try these today, and we'll give you more in the next issue!



Improvising is playing. Play with your instrument, just making sounds. Don't worry about missing notes. Just play around and experiment. Try different ideas - fast, slow, loud, soft, crescendos, decrescendos



Try the three minute rule - If you've never improvised before, practicing it can feel weird at first. To get used to improvising, set a timer for 3 minutes, and just make stuff up on your instrument until it goes off.

Start listening to improvised music, like jazz and blues. Listening to a professional musician improvise can give you new ideas to try, and can help you learn more BY EAR about the language of music.

## **OUR NEW LOOK**

This summer, we had our Summerglen logo, business cards, and website redesigned by the fine graphic designers at Vigor Creative. Please stop by our website and check out our new look!

<http://www.summerglen-music.com>



# **summerglen music**

## *Fall Break - a retreat for the soul*



Join Christina and personal coach Sharon Hayes for a relaxing weekend retreat at Cedar Cross--just an hour north of Raleigh. Treat yourself to drum circles, nature walks and creative arts; plus plenty of free time to just be yourself!

To learn more, please visit  
<http://www.summerglen-music.com/fallbreak.html>



## **Concert Calendar**

Some family-friendly concerts in the Triangle area

**Sunday, October 5 at 4pm, Talley Student Center Ballroom at NC State**

Raleigh Civic Chamber Orchestra presents "Eclectic Mix", featuring works by Purcell, Diamond, and Mehuel. \$10 adults, Kids free!

**Tuesday, Oct. 7 at 8pm, Stewart Theatre at NC State University, Raleigh**

Modern composer Daniel Bernard Roumain performs with the SQ Unit and Andrew! \$5-\$28

**Sunday, October 19th at 7pm, Jones Auditorium at Meredith College, Raleigh**

Join the Raleigh Symphony and harpist Anita Burroughs-Price for an exciting evening of symphonic and harp ensemble music! \$10/\$20

**Sunday, October 26th at 4pm, Carolina Theatre in Durham, NC**

The Triangle Brass Band performs a special concert with the Cedar Ridge H.S. Wind Symphony. \$5-\$10

**Sunday, Nov. 2nd at 3pm, Carolina Theatre in Durham, NC**

William Henry Curry and the Durham Symphony present works by Romantic composer Johannes Brahms.

